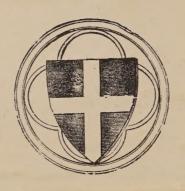
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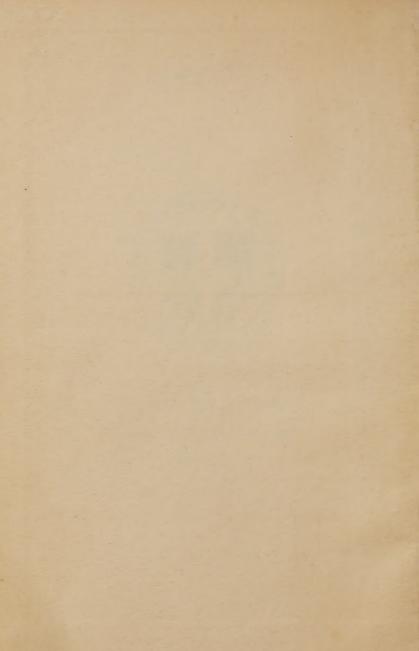
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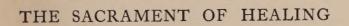


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The Sacrament of Healing

BY THE REV.

JOHN MAILLARD

Warden, Divine Healing Fellowship

FOREWORD BY

JAMES MOORE HICKSON

MORGAN & SCOTT LTD.

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FOREWORD

THE scarcity of books on the important Ministry of Healing is significant. On every other department of the office of the Church there are volumes of books without number. Other ministries have been looked at and examined from every conceivable point of view, some helpful, and some misleading, but there is room for a book on the subject of Divine Healing. A large number of Christians are unfamiliar with its message, and this is the chief ground of their difficulty. I therefore welcome this book by Mr. Maillard. He has had a long and valuable first-hand experience, which dates back fourteen years; and since 1919 his whole time has been devoted to ministering to the sick and afflicted. He has come into personal touch with a large number of sufferers day by day, and his message is sound and practical.

I have followed Mr. Maillard's ministry with deep interest, especially during the years he was at work in the East End of London, where he joined me in giving a helping hand to the sick in their homes. They were the difficult pre-War days. Although conditions are still difficult, they are better than formerly; but the needs of the sick and suffering are not much altered. All that is being done for their relief is far from sufficient, and the advance of science has not appreciably lessened the amount or intensity of pain and affliction. Let science do all that it can, but the Church of Christ has a quota to contribute; and science is not a substitute nor has it superseded the heavenly help of the Great Physician of whom we sing, "Thy touch has still its ancient power."

The needs of to-day cry aloud for a co-ordination of all legitimate agencies and methods of healing, and it is doubtful whether anything less than the magnitude of the world's healing resources, co-ordinated and concentrated, can answer the magnitude of sickness and disease under which it is toiling. In this great redemptive work, the healing power of Christ in His Church must lead the way.

In these pages, the old, old story is sent forth in the clothing of a new and vigorous faith. Its message rings true to the Holy Bible, and that is a test which should commend it very widely. I am sure the book will do much good.

PREFACE

It is a constant experience in both individual and social life that changes come about, although the individuals and communities concerned are unconscious of what is going on at the time. Thus, for example, in the history of the Church the service of the Holy Communion gradually fell from the first place it had occupied in the primitive Church, until this growing neglect was detected by a reformer. He led others to appreciate the loss which they had not previously realized, because the lapse had happened so slowly; they awoke to the fact and were amazed. No time was lost in reinstating this service of the Gospels, which now occupies a prominent place in the life of the Church.

During the years of neglect, people had learnt to do without this spiritual provision, the rediscovery of which was that of a lost treasure, a loss accounting for something of the poverty of faith from which they had suffered. It has taken many years to make up the lost ground.

This is not the only source of spiritual wealth which has suffered in this way. The Church has recently awakened to the fact that it has lost the unity of its primitive years, and that its divisions, so long as they remain, are both a measure of its separation from the power of Christ and a leakage of vital life. Until the divisions are healed and unity is restored there can be little hope of a restoration of the Church's spiritual authority and power. The weakness in the Church lies not so much in defective individual faith as in a maimed and dismembered corporate life.

The Church, then, has realized that its forces are divided and scattered, and is doing all that is possible to recover its unity, knowing that this broken life is an infirmity, which incapacitates it for the work of Christ in the world. Conferences and conversations are being held between the responsible leaders of the separated Communions, in the hope that a basis for reunion may be found. Whether success will crown these efforts is an open question: possibly the only way to unity is to go back to Christ.

On the other hand it is also possible, that when Christ comes again He may find a disintegrated Church; He may even disown all the existing Churches and gather out of them those whom He knows to be the true believers.

We are living in a remarkable age; we see and confess our weaknesses as the disciples of Christ, and in consequence we are endeavouring to retrace the path of faith. The most powerful evidence of this is our return to that Healing Ministry of the Gospels, which has been practically lost to the faith of the Church, and this is the subject to which the pages of this book are devoted.

Any surrender of faith necessitates a false position. When the Church lost faith in the Ministry of Divine Healing, it also lost faith in the will and the ability of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. An unscriptural view of sickness and of the power of God took the place of the practice of the healing of the sick. We must go back to the Bible: we must go back to the Gospels: we must go back to Jesus Christ.

The essay which forms Part II. of this book was contributed by Miss A. Cunningham as an article for my magazine, but I felt it fit in so well with the scheme of what is here written that I obtained her consent to its use in this way. I am indebted to her, and also to Miss G. Beattie for valuable suggestions and revision of the book in its typewritten stages.

It is my earnest prayer that whatever is true and helpful in these pages may be used and prospered by God in the service of those to whom it is our privilege to minister in the faith of the Gospels.

J. M. M.

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THE SACRAMENT OF HEALING

CHAPTER I

THE VISION

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."—Rev. xxi. 1, 2.

TO St. John it was given to see a new heaven and a new earth, for the former things had passed away. And for us? What is it that we see? Are the former things passed away from our vision too?

Vision does not result from a weaving of the imagination, but it is the clear, unclouded sight of faith: and faith sees that Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Faith sees that what happened in Galilee in the year A.D. 30, happens as truly in Australia or in England in the year A.D. 1925. Faith spiritually sees Jesus in the midst of two or three gathered together in His Name. Faith sees that He is with us always, because faith sees the Unseen.

All that Christ did and all that He revealed is

now actually present to the sight of faith. We see Him in every act of healing, in every act of fellowship and service; we see Him as He is, in the splendour of His Risen Life, in the majesty of His Ascended Life, in the strength of His Victorious Life. Faith believes in a Living Christ.

"If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him."—John xiv. 23. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."—MATT. xxviii. 20.

Faith sees the vision of a new earth. Divine healing is only a part of the larger healing of a sick and sinful world. Jesus Christ had the spiritual insight to see all things new; to see the perfect life breaking into manifestation everywhere; to see discords and disorders dissolving through the mighty power of the Spirit. Let us come up then to the Mount of Faith with Jesus, and look out on life through His eyes. We shall not see disease as sent by God for our spiritual good. We shall see Jesus, consumed with grief at the spectacle of sickness, eager to restore the harmony that has been lost, saying to the sufferer, "Have faith in God": "All things are possible to them that believe." We shall see Jesus as God wants to see us, for He is God's Pattern Man, unself-conscious, inspired by the adventure and enterprise of faith.

Through the eyes of Jesus Christ we shall not

only see with new vision the things of the earth, but we shall apprehend with clear spiritual vision the things of the Kingdom of the Spirit—of the heavenly places. And this Kingdom of the Spirit must have an immense population, and great work must be going on there. It is all-important to remind ourselves that man does not work with the aid of material resources only. To those who enjoy the vision of faith the material are the least important and least potent of the resources at their disposal, because they possess a wealth of resources which cannot be measured by material standards.

Those who are accustomed to frequent the Mount of Vision gain facility in the use of these spiritual means; to them "the whole company of heaven" represents not the mere phrase of a religious poem, but the strengthening fellowship of a very real and tangible corporate life—"fellowcitizens with the saints—of the household God."

Spiritual vision is given to those only who use their eyes. If these things are hidden from our view it is simply because our eyes are shut, never because God has concealed them from us.

Jesus Christ is the Prophet of a spiritual order, and faith uses those words only which have meaning there. The language of the disciple must be acquired at the feet of the Master from whom he draws his inspiration, his pattern, all that makes his life. It is through the outward form of the disciple that the Master wills to reveal His inward presence. "Men took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus."

Faith never misunderstands or misconstrues, because it does not dwell on the transitory planes of illusion and misconception.

Faith reaches out hands of divine blessing whereby sorrows are turned into joy. Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning of spiritual light. Faith then is the vision of which Love is the reality, for "God is Love," and therefore faith is the vision of God.

If we look out on life through the eyes of God we shall see what the eyes of Jesus reveal, for He is Love Incarnate. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"

Can anything in the life of Love Incarnate be transitory, unimportant, or local? Love is eternal and its Incarnation must in the nature of things express the Eternal. When Jesus Christ heals the sick He is giving expression to the eternal activity of Love. When He breaks the power of sin and brings cleansing to the soul, He is again giving expression to the activity of Love which never ends.

We know what heaven is by the exhibition of a heavenly life on earth. We know the character and nature of God by the character and nature of the Express Image of His Person. There are Hands which can raise the sick, heal the consumptive, destroy the cancer, deliver the possessed out of captivity, enrich the poor, comfort the sorrowing, restore the prodigal, enthrone righteousness and peace throughout the world; these Hands are the Hands of God.

PART I

CHAPTER II

THE GOSPELS' STANDPOINT

It is the constant tendency of "movements" to diverge from their origins. Thus we shall more profitably apprehend the Ministry of Christian Healing by considering its beginning in the Gospels, than by looking at its present expression in the Church to-day. Some movements indeed lack resemblance to their source only in that they have grown and become fruit-bearing, and this was the hope of Jesus Christ for His Church when He said, "Greater works than these shall ye do." It is a sad reflection that this hope has been so far unfulfilled, and that we cannot appeal to the practice of the Church to give us an accurate representation of the ministry of Christ.

Our point of view is a matter of vital importance. As a man cannot rise higher than the level of his ideal, neither can he have faith beyond the standpoint from which he looks at life. Not a little of the confusion regarding this ministry in the thought of the Church to-day is due to the fact that the standpoint of the Gospels is being overlooked. We are often at the mercy of the experts, who narrow

down the meaning of life, and try to squeeze it into their watertight compartments; but this form of tyranny must be resisted. It is not the first time that a single science has tried to dominate the world, and the present-day tendency of psychology is to explain everything in terms of the human mind. In doing this it has successfully explained many things away, making faith a form of mental suggestion. Since this science has to do solely with mental processes, it is out of its depths in the kingdom of spiritual realities. More than half of the New Testament is a closed book to the understanding of the psychologist, and he comes perilously near to believing that the realm of the supernatural represents a kingdom of the imagination.

Jesus Christ is a messenger from God from the spiritual world. Men have long been speculating about spiritual things, and on these matters they do not cease to speculate. Jesus Christ is God, and His teaching is not a speculation about God, but a revelation of Divinity. This was His mission to the world; He did not come to interpret life from the physical standpoint, but He presented to us an interpretation that was wholly spiritual. His interest was not in the operation of physical and mental processes, but in the presence and operation of the spiritual. His whole life and teaching centres in the fact that man is first and foremost a spiritual being.

We must, therefore, ascend the Mountain of Transfiguration with Jesus Christ if we are to know and understand His revelation to the world. It was thus that He led and trained His first disciples, opening their spiritual eyes and ears to the realities of that unseen world in which we live and move and have our being.

It was not an easy journey for them to take, and there were at least some who considered our Lord to be mentally unbalanced. What He accomplished in the brief space of His public ministry fills us, nevertheless, with wonder. There were some who gave up all and followed Him. He placed them at a standpoint entirely new; they were born again of the Spirit, and saw clearly the other half of life to which they had been blind and deaf. He put them in possession of the spiritual powers of the Kingdom of God, and they saw with their "other" eyes, and heard with their "other" ears.

Jesus Christ was not the first messenger from God to bring an "other world" revelation. Jewish history abounds in such messengers. Christian people are also ready to acknowledge that the messengers of other religions in the world have spoken under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. The revelation of Jesus Christ is, however, unique in that Jesus is unique above all other messengers and all other religions. When we go to Him, we go to the Fountain-head: His teaching is straight from God. Others had been pointing the way; He is the Way. In Him there was the fulness of the Godhead bodily; He came from Heaven that men might be no longer fettered by the limitations of human ignorance, but that they might know

and live in the light of God. Men had previously been groping in the twilight; their half-darkened understanding had kept them in ignorance of the true nature of God and of His attitude towards them. Henceforth what He said and did disposed for all time of their mistaken ideas.

A careful reading of the Gospels makes clear this secret of the life and power of Jesus Christ. He teaches a divine or spiritual knowledge, and He works through a divine or spiritual power. He is Master of every situation, but at the same time He does not coerce the wills of men. Human life is viewed by Him from a standpoint higher than that ever reached before, and He meets all its problems from the same angle. He solved difficulties which men had believed insoluble, and He proved to the world that none were beyond the possibility of redemption, none were hopeless, and none were incurable. He saved the outcasts, and He healed those who had been thought hopeless. The Gospels are full to overflowing of this work. His public ministry was that of a busy Healer, and His success can only be explained in one way-" It is the Spirit that giveth Life." He healed the sick by the power of God. Virtue or divine dynamic entered the suffering bodies, and their condition was thereupon reversed. Something at once ended the progress of the disease, the sickness was immediately arrested, the disorder was terminated and new life was in possession. He was the most successful Healer the world has ever known.

Jesus Christ did not keep His secret to Himself,

nor involve what He did in an atmosphere of mystery. He opened a door which all might enter, and therein lies the value of His revelation for the world. After a careful course of training and instruction, He sent out His disciples to spread the message and extend the work. They, like their Master, became the ambassadors and healers of God.

It is important to remember that Jesus Christ enabled men to break free from the bondage of sin before the Crucifixion, as we shall have occasion to refer to this great event in relation to the healing of soul as well as body. It is also important to remember that His disciples went about healing the sick, before they were possessed by the Pentecostal powers. Whatever may be the significance of the Crucifixion and all that followed it, the Ministry of Healing has its beginning much earlier, and to find this we must turn to the teaching of the Old Testament.

CHAPTER III

THE STANDPOINT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE Old Testament is not an easy book to read. It makes a great difference whether we read it in its own light, or in the fuller light of the Gospel revelation; for its limited revelation of God can only be regarded as consistent, when it is viewed as progressive. There is much in its expression that lacks the fulness of the Gospel light, and now that we possess this, its revelation cannot be complete for us. It is surprising how many believers live in the shadowy light of the Old Testament religion, and are more familiar with its spirit and writings, than with that of the Gospels and the New Testament.

The Old Testament must not be, however, on this account rejected, for, when read in the light of the revelation of Jesus Christ, its teaching strikingly fits into His life. Without any forcing, a solution can be found for all that appears inconsistent with the fuller teaching of the Gospels.

We may say then that the Old Testament raises the whole question of the destiny of man, and that it just fails to give the answer, which is supplied in Jesus Christ. All the problems and perplexities of human life are found in its pages: it is a true history of man's search for God: it is this, and it is much more. We must sift the history, and when we have relieved it of the human elements, we shall find a wonderful revelation of man's destiny, leading up to a consummation in the Incarnate life of Christ. The revelation of the Old Testament is said to be the shadow of things to come. In this sense it is wholly consistent with the Gospels, because it does not fall behind the New Testament in its affirmations of the goodness of God. It reveals Him as the Creator and Sustainer of man, and never teaches that He is the Author of human disorders and diseases: these are ascribed to human disobedience: man is not punished for his sins, but by his sins. firmities and sickness are in no sense due to God. He has made ample and perfect provision for the true health and well-being of the whole creation. Poverty is never due to a shortage of supply on the part of the Creator: sickness is never the result of failure on the part of God to sustain life, neither does He ever send poverty or sickness as a means of working spiritual good. Whatever difficulty we may feel in accounting for disease, we cannot ascribe its origin to God.

So much human history is mixed up with the writings of the Old Testament, that many have mistaken the human element for divine truth. has led to conclusions which cannot be reconciled with the message and ministry of Christ, but in this sense only, the teaching of the Old Testament is inconsistent with the New. The Books of the Law in the Old Testament leave no room for doubt that nothing is lacking on the part of God to maintain this world in perfect happiness and health. There is only one condition to its attainment, and that is the holiness of man, which is only another way of saying that man is a free agent. This moral element is part of his constitution, and whilst it accounts for his lapses and disobedience it is also the ground of his righteousness.

The Old Testament teaches no less clearly than the New, that man is dependent upon God, and that his environment is God's care. God who feeds the birds also feeds His children. Man's great problem is to know how to make the best use of his free will, and it is the message of Jesus Christ that teaches him how to do so. We do not doubt the Old Testament teaching that holiness is God's will for man. We have only failed to believe that bodily health has its place in this condition. This is because we have separated the laws of the body from the will of God. This divorce has been the cause of numberless human disorders, and has led us to regard the body as independent of the operation of spiritual law. The divorce has been so complete in some minds, that the flesh has been thought of as something altogether evil, and has even been closely connected with disease.

The scriptural view of the body is quite different from this, and St. Paul is in complete accord with the account of the Creation in the Book of Genesis when he says, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own." The body is not the

enemy of man; it is his ally, and it is capable of the highest or the lowest service, in whatever kind of work to which he may dedicate it. God never made the body to be a burden, nor to be the centre or the object of human thought and care. It is the object of His thought and care, and that is sufficient. He never made the body to be sick or infirm, and such conditions are never brought about by Him. Neither did He make the body to be dependent for its health upon medicines or material remedies. Its health is as much a part of its constitution as are man's happiness and holiness. The body, mind, and spirit are inseparable, but the spirit is the greatest of the three. The spirit is the ego or the "I." "I am not the body, and I am not the mind. I have a body, and I have a mind, but I am the spirit."

CHAPTER IV

THE STANDPOINT OF THE CHURCH

THE Old Testament points onward to the coming of Jesus Christ, whose incarnate life finds its complete expression in the Church, which is the Body. As the New Testament is the completion and fulfilment of the Old, so the Church in the order of sequence is the fruit and extension of the teaching of the New Testament. Its message is the message of Christ, and its ministry is that of the spiritual hierarchy instituted by Him and of which He was the Master.

The close of Christ's earthly ministry spells the birth of the Church, which takes up His work where He laid it down. It is the spiritual successor of His conquest of death, of His Resurrection and Ascension, whilst at Pentecost it receives the baptism of divine life and power. Its mission is to the world, but its message is from heaven. As there dwelt in the incarnate body of Jesus Christ the fulness of the Godhead, so the Holy Spirit indwells the Church, which is the Body of Christ, and the vehicle of His teaching and His ministry. It is the instrument of Him to whom belong all power and authority both in heaven and earth; the channel of divine life, divine compassion and

sympathy, wisdom and power, love, joy, cleansing and healing.

This divine character and constitution of the Church reflects itself in the new nature of all who are born again of the Spirit into the Body of Christ. Each individual member is energized and guided by the Spirit which fills the Body, whose teaching is full of heavenly meaning, expressed in tangible earthly terms. In Holy Baptism we are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion; the sacrament signifies a giving up of the way of the world, in order to embrace the way of Christ. In the New Testament the necessary condition of entering this fellowship is repentance, which means much more than confession of sins. Our English word is a translation of the Greek word metanoia, which means change of mind, thought, and consciousness: a turning from thought which is humanly evolved, to thought which is inspired by God. The change is often so great that we can only properly describe it as being born again of the Spirit; life enters an entirely new sphere; we put off the old man or Adam-nature and put on Christ.

This rebirth of faith is equally true of the physical body as it is of the mind and spirit. As the spirit enters upon a supernatural existence, so also the body is clothed with supernatural energy. Henceforward life is sacramental or spiritual both for body and soul. Christ functions through the whole man, not through the mind and spirit only, but also through the body, as the vine functions through its branches. Through Regeneration man enters upon

that life which is "Christ in you, the hope of

glory."

In this affirmation of man's supernatural endowment the word "hope" refers to the presence of the indwelling spiritual nature, and the word "glory" applies to the growth and manifestation of that which is within. Man grows into the divine stature of his God-nature as leaves grow upon a tree, in virtue of the vital life with which he is filled.

Perfection and impregnable health are thus brought within the reach of man, for nothing less than this can be true of the child of God, as it was true of Jesus Christ, and as it must be true of His Body, the Church. St. John regarded this as a present possibility of man's divine character when he wrote, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God."

The ineffectiveness of which the Christian Church has been so often guilty is in some measure due to its silence about this teaching. It has failed to emphasize the regenerate nature and divine possibilities of the child of God. In doing so, it has made remote what Christ brought nigh, and we have become accustomed to an ideal of spiritual infirmity. As our authority for the perfection of man, we have an even greater witness than that of St. John, for it was Jesus Himself who said, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." The same ideal has a prominent place in His great prayer: "And the glory which Thou

The Standpoint of the Church

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gavest Me I have given them: that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou has sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me."

CHAPTER V

HEALING THROUGH FAITH

WE may now, therefore, assume that faith is not blind belief, but that it implies spiritual insight and understanding. The term "blind" indeed can only be applied to the inability and refusal of faith to see and acknowledge the standpoint of materialism.

We do not always arrive at a fully developed faith as soon as our lives begin to move in the direction of God. We climb step by step, not necessarily laboriously, but carefully and thoughtfully. The preceding chapters endeavour to summarize the faith which has been growing in clearness in the experience of the writer during the past twenty years. He began at a much lower level of spiritual apprehension, which proved to be a stepping-stone to the higher revelation of Jesus Christ. At first he accepted whole-heartedly the idealism which regarded Love as the great objective reality, believing it to be supreme, though often silent and unseen. This idealism was not borrowed from Platonism and had no reference to the subjective affections; but it referred nevertheless to a possible relationship between persons, and he considered it the only real hope for the solution

of the social problem. The service of Love was something to which all might subscribe, and unity and fellowship might thus be won, as the fruit of a common obedience to its dictates.

Many experiences gradually convinced him that Love is a healing medicine for sickness. He knew that mother-love was often the instrument used by God in healing a sick child without the aid of any material remedy. "Love is life, where life is worth the living; the gift of God, which He is ever giving." A mother can be a channel of creative, healing love, so long as the door to her affections is barred against fear and anxiety. He knew many women who were miracle workers. He also knew that a son could be the channel of the healing balm of love for the relief of a sick and suffering mother. Its life-giving forces were powerful in blessing, beyond anything he had previously known.

Such experiences gave a new meaning to prayer and he found himself praying with great earnestness, not so much in words as in a succession of deep desires for the well-being and good of others. Love inspired these desires and directed them to individuals who were in need: Love pierced the veil of material conditions and opened up an inward communion, that led onward and upward to the divine Author of life. Relationship and obligations were cold and formal until vitalized by love.

All this was very near to being "born of the Spirit," and it was but a short step to the realization of the Heavenly Father's love, as the great healing force for all human sicknesses and disorders,

perfectly expressed in the incarnate life of Jesus Christ. Henceforth idealism gave place to revelation, and Jesus Christ was recognized as the great objective reality. For He is the meeting-point of heaven and earth, of the unseen and seen, and faith finds its meaning and centre only in Him. The Gospels prove the power and willingness of Jesus Christ to heal the sick, and richly illustrate the contact of His healing force with the ranks of suffering humanity. He was in possession of a dynamic power, which was able to overcome the forces of disorder, to arrest and turn the tide of physical weakness. What He thus manifested was not an individual prerogative: "Every good and every perfect gift is from above." It is the substance of God's creation; it is the abiding reality of all the ages; it is found in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, and it has its place in the Book of the Revelation. Jesus Christ completely and perfectly embodied this power in His incarnate life. He brought the reality of the unseen world into our daily human experience. He made clear that faith is a spiritual sense, which can be developed and exercised, until all the other senses are enriched and controlled by it.

We must now consider the mental aspect of faith, for the mind undoubtedly plays its part in healing; but only as the subordinate or the servant of faith. Mental states undoubtedly aid or retard healing, and they are produced as the result of the things which are filling the mind. The mind itself is neutral, ready to be friend or foe; it does not heal,

and it does not injure, but it can be made the instrument of either disease or of healing. A mind possessed by fear may easily admit disease into the body; similarly a worrying disposition opens the door of the physical life to all possible disorders. The necessary condition for Divine Healing is a mind stayed on God, where God is in possession and His love has taken control: confidence in Him alone works the miracle of perfect peace.

This neutrality of the mind applies equally to the spirit and to the body, for the body is a tabernacle or habitation of the spirit, and it is the redemptive ministry of Christ which has raised the body to this holy service. We do not, however, deny that the body may be profaned, and may become the habitation of evil, thus becoming a hovel when it should be the shrine of sacramental life. Let us not therefore blindly blame the habitation for the conduct of its inhabitants. Even so Christ cleansed the Temple from the defiling presence of hypocrites and thieves.

When man is living from the spiritual centre of his being, and when he is controlled by the Spirit of God, all his faculties will work together for good and will furnish channels or lines of communication for the work of the Holy Spirit in strict subordination to His inward promptings.

In harmony with the Gospels, St. James declares that the prayer of faith shall heal the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up. Here again faith is something vastly greater than any of the channels through which it works. It is the faith behind the prayer, which makes of prayer an avenue of salvation and healing.

The prayer of faith inspired by the love of God is the greatest force known to man. It gives him insight into the Spiritual Kingdom where creative life resides, and brings to his mind and body the refreshment of heavenly benediction; it enables him to live in that world of the Spirit of which he is the child.

Prayer has its own language, and from its vocabulary are excluded many words that are commonly accepted by the world. It does not know the meaning of incurability or hopelessness, except as suggestions to be resisted and rejected, calling forth the hosts of the Heavenly Kingdom to overcome them. Prayer is the language of the love and care of our Heavenly Father. Too often our prayers are conditioned by phrases of human inability and infirmity, binding us to the weaknesses from which we need to be delivered. Too often faith is only skin deep, betraying our fears instead of reflecting our hopes. Too often we get into the depths before we look for divine help, and only when all material remedies have proved unavailing, do we attempt to avail ourselves of the sure promises of God, revealed in Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER VI

THE CORNER-STONES OF HEALING FAITH

THE chief corner-stone then of the life of faith is the love of God, manifested in the triumphant life of Jesus Christ and consummated in the great facts of the Resurrection and the Ascension. "The Spirit which raised up Jesus from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies"; but even before the Spirit raised up Jesus from the dead, many had experienced His

quickening or life-giving power.

If we have been in doubt as to the source of the healing power of Jesus Christ, the miracle of His resurrection will remove that doubt, for it explains everything: the power which restored life to the withered arm, which staunched the issue of blood, which recovered sight to the blind, and which healed every sickness and every disease among the people came from God. It is unquestionable that the power of God, which was able to rise to the height of a resurrection from physical death, can also overcome and heal the physical diseases, which are the symptoms of death.

The miracle of the Resurrection is then the vantage-point from which we contemplate our Christian Faith—a structure built on the solid foundation of which Jesus Christ Himself is the

chief corner-stone. Faith based on anything less than a foundation such as this would leave us in the twilight of doubt, tossed hither and thither by every contrary wind of human circumstance; but a faith, inspired by the truth of the Risen Life, can face all the vicissitudes of life, and meet unflinchingly every adverse condition.

What we call death is but the laving aside of the physical temple, that has enshrined the spirit. The release of the spirit from its earthly dwellingplace through physical disease or violent death cannot, except with difficulty, be reconciled with the will of the Loving Father. Such a method must surely be contrary to the perfect expression of His will, and exhibits man's failure to reflect that will. Again it points out the abiding task of faith, for it is surely part of our service in the healing ministry of Christ to aim at ridding the closing scene of this earthly life from the pain and the delirium of bodily disease, and to bring into the last hours of our pilgrimage the first flush of the dawn of the new day.

As we turn to the Gospels, the Resurrection of Tesus Christ from the dead and the story of the raising of Lazarus seem to prove that the destruction of the body by disease is no part of the divine design for man. Again the power of the Spirit by which our Lord ascended into the heavenly places can be seen at work throughout His incarnate life. It was not in His final Ascension that He first experienced this power, and it is the lesson of the Transfiguration that the power that inspired Him.

enabled Him to lift others also into the heavenly places: the blessings that they received were evidence of their vital contact with the divine Master—Jesus Christ. He, Himself, offers the same explanation in His command, "Heal the sick, and say unto them, the Kingdom of Heaven is come nigh unto you." The thought of the descent of the Kingdom is fused into the ascent of the human spirit through the power of faith, and such a fusion reflects itself in the beautiful collect for Ascension Day—one of the greatest healing prayers of the Christian Liturgy:

"Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe Thy only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with Him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end."

These two miracles of the spiritual world, the Resurrection and the Ascension of Jesus Christ, fill us with wonder. They are incapable of explanation, except as supernatural works, and they can therefore be apprehended only by man's supernatural endowment of faith. They are not incredible to reason, but they belong to a higher level of experience. If we would walk by faith, possessing and exercising the higher knowledge of the Kingdom of Heaven, we must break down the materialism of reason, wherever it has erected walls of partition between us and the spiritual world.

There is again a third miracle of the same order: the birth of Jesus Christ. He was born of the Virgin Mother in a miraculous manner: His conception was the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. This proves that man is not evolved in the manner taught by many evolutionists, but that he is a special creation of God. "God breathed into man the breath of life and he became a living soul." It also proves that God can give life whenever He wills. He can do it where sickness has injured or maimed the body. God, who can fashion Jesus by supernatural processes, can, by the same processes, enable Him to refashion the bruised and broken bodies of suffering and sinful humanity.

The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the fellowship chosen by Christ to be the seed of the Church, is again of the supernatural order. It wrought a marvellous change in those who experienced the outpouring of the Divine Life: an experience in which they all had a part. At this moment in the spiritual growth of the soul, God gave His Spirit in a new fashion to the assembled disciples—the Holy Spirit "lighted" upon each of them. Thus was the structure of the Church perpetuated—that structure in which the Incarnate Life was to find its perpetuation and extension. It is the fellowship of the "Body of Christ," sharing in His triumph over sin, disease, and death; animated by the supernatural power of the indwelling Spirit; able to "do all things through Christ" from whom it draws its life and strength.

CHAPTER VII

THE REGENERATE LIFE

T would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of a right foundation in the Christian life, for it is a living foundation, and everything that rests upon it partakes of its nature. The unique wealth of the revelation of Jesus Christ lies in the fact, that it provides a foundation upon which the whole of human experience can stand, because it brings everything into vital contact with the Spirit, and from this vantage-ground we form the relationships of daily life. It admits us to a life where everything is new. It takes from us no pleasure that is legitimate, whilst it safeguards us from dependence upon material things. It teaches man the glorious liberty of freedom from dependence upon external circumstances, and shows that he is not the creature of his environment, but that his true wealth consists in the harmony of his inward life.

The regenerate life is lived from a new centre, "the secret source of every precious thing." The life-stream of a new nature enters the spirit, and flows through the will, the mind, the affections, the desires, and the body, as through tributaries.

The wealth of a life is determined by its associations. If it depended only upon what was contained within itself, it would be a poor thing indeed, and many lives often do not rise above this poverty level, both in a material and spiritual sense. Its relationships are the important factor, and where one is consciously living in relationship with God, he will live, and move, and have his being not within himself, but in God. This relationship is the main spiritual artery in the life of the child of God, and through it there circulates the fulness of progressive heavenly strength. There are also many other relationships, for the Kingdom of the regenerate life is not a barren waste, but the realm of which Christ said, "I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly."

To what extent, then, is it possible to lead the regenerate life? This is the problem which faces the disciple of Christ. The answer will depend upon the direction in which we are looking. If we believe that life is governed by material circumstances, our experience of the regenerate life will stop short at that point. If, on the other hand, we believe that material circumstances have no more power than we give them, we shall not be overcome by them. The regenerate life is conditioned by the indwelling Spirit of God and by nothing else. God made man to have dominion, not to be dominated. In order to fulfil this glorious destiny, man must have the power of the dominion within himself; he must be filled with the Spirit which containeth all things, "one God and Father of you all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

If the fuller spiritual life is not at present attain-

able, the world may rightly ask whether the difference between the natural and the supernatural life is only a question of sentiment, whether much of the language of Holy Scripture in this respect is not extravagant. This doubt need not be met by argument. The Church has ample witnesses to prove the truth of Christianity. Christ does not reveal an impossible ideal. Wherever there is failure to reach it, the weakness will not be found in the promises of God, but in the lukewarmness of His children. It is a fact of history that men and women have died to the self-contained life, and have been born again of the Spirit of God.

The Church has often drifted from this ideal, believing it to be too good to be true. It has, however, as often returned, and we are living in the days of a return to the pure Gospel of Christ. During the years of drifting, the ideal of the Church has been sadly lowered, thereby greatly lessening its spiritual authority and power, and making its ministry weak and ineffective.

Where men and women have violent tempers they have been taught that faith will greatly soften them, but they have seldom been led to expect more than this. And yet we cannot for one moment believe that personal contact with Jesus Christ in Galilee accomplished so little. Perhaps our experience is at fault. We have thought of the spiritual as something indefinite and unsubstantial: we have failed to believe in the reality of the risen life.

A large part of our religious literature shows a lack of spiritual balance. Our teaching has centred

in Calvary and we have forgotten the power of the Resurrection Life and the glorious indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We do not realize that the spiritual world is a world of reality and intelligence. When we speak to one another, our intelligence enables us to understand what is said, and to act upon it. We know our needs, we enjoy human companionship, and we are knit together in the bonds of mutual service. We do not know everything about the spiritual world, but at least we can be certain that it is not less intelligent than the one in which we live.

If the teaching of Jesus Christ is true, the Kingdom of the spiritual is all around us and is the greatest reality that we can experience. His intelligence far exceeds ours, and the Master knows our needs before we ask Him. Those who are born again of the Spirit may experience the companionship of Jesus with the same force and reality as did the first disciples in Galilean days.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HOLY COMMUNION

I T is a calamity, the dire consequences of which we are unable to estimate, that the service, which was intended by Christ to be the centre of unity in His Church, should be the battleground and dividing line of believers. This comes of the tendency of the human mind to define everything in terms of physical experience. It is an indisputable fact that in the Last Supper, Jesus Christ took bread and wine and said, "This is My Body," and "This is My Blood."

We must, therefore, believe that in a real and spiritual sense Jesus Christ is indeed present in the Holy Communion. If He is not present, then He is absent, and none of us believe this: none of us believe that whilst we meet together in this solemn and sacred feast the place of Jesus Christ is vacant. There are many who have never found it necessary to go further than this statement of the truth. To the materially minded all things are material, but to the spiritually minded all things are sacramental, and they have the capacity to appreciate spiritual values.

What do we understand by the Body and Blood of Jesus? He was still in His physical Body when

He spoke of the bread and wine as His Body and Blood. So we must attach a higher and spiritual rather than a lower and physical sense to the meaning of the words. It is true that our Lord, in handling the elements, referred to the sacrifice of the Body and the shedding of Blood, but this again would have little meaning for us unless it had reference to the supernatural interpretation. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ is not to be limited to His death on the Cross on Calvary, since His was the Life of Sacrifice or self-surrender from first to last; and the Holy Communion embraces all that is signified in His public ministry and His risen life, together with His sacrifice upon the Cross, to offer a propitiation for sinful humanity. We seek in this chapter to apply this service to the bodily life of God's child, for the sacrament is heavenly food for body and soul, and divinely nourishes the whole being.

That this Communion is from Christ Himself is sufficient, for us, to guarantee its divine nature and its power. With this safeguard in mind, we need not be nervous of the language we use about it, so long as it is worthy of Him who instituted the Sacrament. It may be difficult to find language to explain to others how this service ministers health to the body, but here again we must have recourse to the foundations of our faith. Every blessing that touches the spirit of man overflows into his whole being, spiritual, mental, and physical: it is impossible to draw the line between spiritual and physical, and if we attempt to do so it is at the

expense of the physical. God has not separated them, and if man does so, his life will be maimed in the process, since the body is the living organism in which the Spirit dwells, and the presence of the Spirit in this temple fills the whole building with light.

Many sufferers have experienced, in making their Communion, the healing of physical sickness. The physical eye sees bread and wine, but to spiritual understanding comes the touch of Christ. The writer recalls the experience of the vicar of a parish, who was taking the Holy Communion to a sick woman who was rapidly sinking. The physical conditions left no room for doubt as to the nearness of the end, and he returned later in the day fully expecting to find that her spirit had passed on. On entering the house, there was a far different story to tell. The Divine Life re-energized the body, and as she received the Holy Sacrament the woman experienced the warmth of the creative life of the Spirit glowing within in her body. She never looked back and was soon quite well.

The Holy Communion is undoubtedly a sacrament of sustenance and amendment. If we thought out the logical consequences of some of our theological quibbles, we should realize the poverty of our faith. In denying the supernatural element of the Holy Communion we deprive it of all potency for good in the "strengthening and refreshing" of body and soul.

Many have found fuller faith in the healing power of Christ, through a correct understanding of the

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spiritual benefits conveyed in this service, and there are not a few who believe that the Holy Communion will become the great healing service in the Church in the Revival which is already taking place.

CHAPTER IX

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

BELIEVERS in Jesus Christ, without exception, acknowledge their overwhelming sense of the need of deliverance from sin, and realize that they cannot experience the assurance of divine pardon, nor draw upon its enabling grace, without confession of the wrong done. "The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins"; the glory of the Christian faith is its provision for cleansing from sin, and the shelter that it offers to the sinstricken and heavy-laden soul.

What they do not so readily apprehend is the effect of divine forgiveness on the consequences of sin, where these consequences directly affect bodily health. The righteousness of the principle given in a vision by St. Paul in the epistle of the Romans, "What a man sows, that also shall he reap," is universally accepted. Where, through his own wrong-doing, he sows the seeds of ill-health, he must face the consequences; should he, however, be converted, and begin to lead a new life, ought he to expect the physical effects of sin to be taken away? That a man can be both forgiven and healed is made sure for us when Christ said to the sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee; take up thy bed and walk." In this instance that

gracious cleansing by the Saviour embraced the body of the sick man, as well as his soul. Whilst it is true that a man may reap physical sickness through his own wrong-doing, neither is sin nor the consequence of sin irrevocable; as soon as he begins to sow the seeds of good life, he will begin to reap renewed health.

In a healing mission ten years ago, one of the applicants for treatment was a man suffering from a bodily affliction, which no physical remedies had been able to relieve. He had been in bondage to a secret sin of which he was now paying the price. The missioner's direction to Christ was followed by an earnest and humble confession of the sin committed, and the same night the man enjoyed unbroken sleep, which had long forsaken him, whilst in two days he was raised from his sick-bed. He had been led to believe in a God who can restore the years which the locusts of sin had eaten.

That wrong-doing must be paid for by its equivalent of physical suffering and sickness is not a scriptural doctrine. We must, however, keep in mind the divine caution, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee." The mark of sincerity in every confession of sin is amendment of life, rather than an expression of overwhelming sorrow or an elaborate statement of wrong-doing. Whenever there is sincere confession the sin is both forgiven and wiped out, since forgiveness is but the application to the sinful soul of the cleansing Blood of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

If we have been guilty, and have fallen many

times into the sin of jealousy, and seek the forgiveness of Christ, He breaks the chain by which we have fettered ourselves and sets us free; but His enabling grace does more than this, for when the ground has been cleared of the evil growth, He plants the seed of generous thoughts, and lays the axe to the roots of sin, making the possibility of deliverance complete.

The Church, then, is commissioned by Christ to heal the sick, but whilst He makes use of the agency of His disciples the act of healing comes from Him. Again Jesus Christ has commissioned the Church to proclaim the forgiveness of sins, but the absolution is that of Christ. "The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins," bestow forgiveness and expel the spirit of evil, which had prompted the wrong-doing and had gained control over an unwilling victim.

The ministry of exorcism is closely connected with the ministry of absolution, and in some cases the two work simultaneously. There are sufferers, who have resorted to every spiritual help without obtaining relief, and they describe their condition as that of being bound by a spirit of evil. In the case of kleptomaniacs, of inebriates, of those who are morally perverted—all these would do and give anything to get free from the evil which afflicts them, but the spirit of evil is in possession and will not be gainsaid.

We do not for a moment contend that all sickness is due to the wrong-doing of the individual sufferer, but we can, without hesitation, affirm that all sickness is due to the existence and the potency of sin. The mystery of evil offers a problem which to our limited vision is insoluble, but this aspect, at least, is clear to us—that there is an intimate connection between evil, and sickness, and suffering. This has been brought home to the writer in many instances where the ministry of exorcism has freed victims, previously believed to be beyond powers of redemption, from moral and spiritual ills.

A nurse had been for many years the slave of drug-taking, yielding to a craving, which steadily and insistently increased. Only when she accepted the message of Christ's power to set the captive free, and, after careful spiritual preparation, humbly received this special ministry, did she experience gradual and eventually complete release from the evil that had dominated her.

A man, who for twenty-five years had fought a losing battle against a secret moral vice—whose life had been a prolonged act of hypocrisy—the outward profession of a practising Christian belying the moral corruption within—accepted as a revelation the message that Christ, who could cure the sick in body, could also strengthen the disabled will. After careful preparation, he received the ministry of Christ's messenger, the foul spirit of impurity was commanded in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth to depart from him, and the power against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail" drove out the evil spirit.

In cases such as these, the presence of evil is clearly manifested; but something of the same

character is present in all sicknesses—it is only a question of degree—the shadow if not the form of spiritual ill is there, like a dark presence, and so often it is true that physical illness casts its influence also over the powers of the mind: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

places.

We so often fail through lack of apprehension of the conflict in which we are engaged in seeking the health of both the body and the mind. We bring every possible material remedy to bear on our condition, and do not cast ourselves in entire dependence upon God, until we are driven into a corner, and the appeal to God is the only hope that is left to us. The followers of Jesus Christ must remember that they are spiritual beings—made in the image of God—and that the weapons of their warfare against the powers of evil are not carnal but spiritual, to the pulling down of strongholds.

CHAPTER X

THE PROBLEM OF PAIN

THE line of separation which divides the suffering which accompanies sickness and disease from the suffering which attends the pursuit of an ideal, is more or less distinct. Suffering in the cause of righteousness is in part the price of its attainment: Jesus Christ was despised and rejected of men, and the reason is not far to seek. He suffered as many had suffered before, and have suffered since, for He stood for something which aroused the hostility of men, and His ideal led Him to the Cross: the sinless one experienced all the agony that was involved in the contact with sinfulness and sin.

All this is quite intelligible, and no man worthy of the name would complain of treatment such as this, for the Christian religion necessarily implies suffering: those who accept it are bidden "to take up their cross daily"; to them it is given as the "Spirit-bearing Body" to "fill up that which is behind in the sufferings of Christ." Thus we can, and we must face suffering, whether it be little or much, when we are single-hearted in the service of God and man.

To strive, however, to secure it, on the assumption that "pain" is in itself a mark of Christian per-

fection is a perverted understanding of the Gospel of Salvation, according to the revelation of Jesus Christ, who in His incarnate life and in His death upon the Cross made the perfect and complete sacrifice for the sin of the world. The Master who can assure His puzzled disciples in the hour of separation "in the world ye shall have tribulation" voices also the gracious promise of "the joy that no man taketh from you"—of "the joy that may be full."

In our days, indeed, it is very possible for the true servant of Jesus Christ, who has the mind and spirit of his Master, to enter into this joy. If his message and witness bear a high standard of social righteousness, which expose and threaten vested interests, he may be made to feel the unpopularity of his teaching, but on the other hand the true disciple of Christ finds welcome, wherever he goes, for men and women are looking for strong spiritual leaders, and everywhere a vital faith is ready to spring into life.

There is much confused thinking on this difficult subject of the problem of pain which undoubtedly must find its place in the life of the disciple, but which exists simultaneously with the joy, and peace, and confidence of the mind which is stayed on Christ. "Jesus suffered, and the disciple is not above his Master," is the solution of the problem often offered, so inadequate is the appreciation and understanding of many believers of the mission and sufferings of Jesus Christ. The measure and the merit of our suffering depends, however, upon our mental attitude, and the spirit which inspires our service.

It is the testimony of one, who has worked in the poverty-stricken areas of London, that each day brought its own thrill as he went out in the spirit of adventure to preach and teach Jesus Christ. It was only in as far as he was identified in his own heart with his Master, that any misrepresentation or rejection of his message caused him suffering: the greatest sorrow that he experienced was the sight of the needless suffering of others—not "sent" from God, but due to the sinfulness and selfishness of men.

The privations of the poor—so often referred to as their cross-were in the main caused by the oppression of their richer neighbours, or by their own intemperance of life. The patience, with which they were often borne, bore witness indeed to the influence of the Holy Spirit, who "bloweth where He listeth," but the conditions which produced them were as remote as anything could be from the cross and sufferings of Christ. Awful ignorance, and spiritual blindness were forcibly brought home to him at every turn. The diseases which were rampant could, in almost every case, be traced to the bad conditions with which they were surrounded, and illustrated, not the ordering of God, but the selfishness of men, who were ready for gain to exploit their neighbour.

The medical profession has recently told us that there are some diseases for which there is no known remedy, and whose cause is still hidden from research. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that flesh and blood disease conditions have their secret source in mental and moral disease conditions, and that the origin of many physical diseases can be traced to fear, so close is the link between the mental and physical state. The faculty has often erred in limiting their search to the physical disease area, whereas the root of the trouble could be found only in other spheres—atmospheric, psychic, moral, social, industrial, racial, domestic, or religious. We are all either hurting or healing one another, and how can we number the many tributaries that go to form the main stream of disease. The processes which bring it about may be both silent and unconscious, but we may rest assured that our mental condition is the most important factor in the situation. When we seek for healing we should look up } to God, and when we investigate the causes of our sickness we should look down to man. So often, on . the contrary, have we attributed the cause of our trouble to God, whilst we have sought its remedy from man.

Carnal vice is again a prolific cause of disease, which may be contracted from association with others, or inherited as a legacy from our forebears. The sins of the fathers are still visited upon the children. The seed of disease is often buried in the bodies of our offspring, requiring only undue strain or exacting conditions to cause it to spring into being. Such a line of thought is far from being exhausted in this brief treatise, and a further line of inquiry would expose the conspiracy of silence and the so-called mystery concerning disease.

The problem of suffering then must be approached in the light of the conditions which produce it.

Every effort and every victory embraces, at some stage, a degree of suffering. To the men who attempted to climb Mount Everest, the purpose of high adventure altogether outweighed any temporary suffering that might be involved; their faith, again, was not endangered because their efforts were not crowned with complete success. So men and women who embark on spiritual enterprises do not ascribe their failure to the inscrutable will of God. In faithful pursuit of their ideal, they cast their bread upon the waters: to them it will be given to find it after many days.

Many heroic sufferers are upheld by the conviction that the unrelieved pain of their lives enables them to share in the sufferings of Christ. Undoubtedly He reveals Himself by many methods: who amongst us would presume to question the manner in which He wills to hold contact with each individual human soul—the instruments with which He lays His touch upon the sons of men?

Nevertheless, when we turn to the Gospels, we see Jesus as the Healer of "every sickness and every disease amongst the people," and we are bound to confess that, in our human experience, the suffering of disease is a waste product of life. We must never rest content with our failure to heal, nor take refuge in the subterfuge that sickness, patiently borne, is the mark of the Christian, and is sent by God. Of course we fail in our attempt to bring relief, just as we often fail in the adventure of faith, but failure ought not to mean more to us than to the soldier, or the adventurer, who return

to the attack with renewed determination. Failure ought to increase our dependence upon God, to deepen our penitence, to strengthen our perseverance.

Thank God there are not a few who will not yield to the demon of disease and suffering as in any sense the ordering of God. Such stalwart souls are doing more for the redemption of the world from the scourges of the body than—with all reverence for its achievements—science can ever do. There are many who leave this earth through the gateway of disease, yet with unwavering faith in the present power of Christ to heal. It is such faith that will eventually remove the mountain of bodily corruption.

Christ, in His contact with disease, had one attitude and one only. He succeeded where we fail, for the simple reason that He had faith over and above our faith; the power of the Holy Spirit suffered no loss in flowing through the pure channel of His sacred Humanity. However closely we may cling to the belief that material and spiritual means supplement one another, we have to remember that Jesus Christ never used material remedies, but that He looked always to the presence and the operation of the Holy Spirit.

We resort to material remedies, because we fall short of His measure of faith. No reference made here to materia medica is made in disparagement of that science, but in disparagement of the feeble faith of believers, who lack the spiritual growth which should enable them to enjoy the fruit of the divine revelation of their Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XI

THE HEALING OF CHILDREN

I T is a recognized fact that children are sensitive to all kinds of influences, physical, mental, and spiritual. They will quickly respond to physical environment, either bad or good, and quickly absorb the atmosphere which surrounds them. A home of a low moral tone will soon stamp its impression on the child, who, however, is as sensitive to good in its plastic age, as it is to evil. Its whole being will react harmoniously in the presence of faith as in the presence of fear.

We cannot therefore begin too early with the training of children. The bodily organism is already sensitive to influences during the formative processes of prenatal months, and the mental life of the mother has a twofold influence on the unborn child. It reacts healthily on the body and character of the child, and it also counteracts unhealthy influences to which it might otherwise be heir, either from the mother or father or earlier forebears. Because a parent is one in a vicious circle of mental sufferers, there is no reason why the offspring should be included in the circle. A mother can guard against this, and she may be used by God to prevent it and to destroy the entail of mental disease. Her

faith can raise and keep the body of the unborn child on the spiritual plane, uncontaminated by, and out of reach of, mental disorders.

God uses the shelter of the mother's body for the growth and unfolding of the child body; He does not, however, use it as a passive partner in His creative work, but as a living agency. As the faith of the earthly parent is a channel of the power of the Spirit for her own bodily conditions, so also it embraces the dependent life, and the function of creation is kept on the spiritual plane. We can either help, or hinder the creative work of God, and many make a wrong beginning by adopting the materialistic basis of life. If we begin by believing that human birth is outside the compass of the activity of the Spirit, then it will be to us according to our faith, because God has conditioned the manifestation of the Spirit by our faith. fatalist attitude is all too common; if we believe a succession of traits of weakness to be inevitable, we thereby exclude the recreative life of the Spirit of God in and through His child.

A crushing weight of earth-bound human weakness rests upon woman in connection with her procreative functions. Her weakness is consented to by all, and more often than not the trouble is met more than half-way by its acceptance, however regretfully, as inevitable. She is thus tied and bound by submission to physical and material laws, from which there is no escape and no relief, and for which there is no healing. But much of the weakness and silent suffering is quite unnecessary;

it can be overcome, and health can reign even where weakness has abounded for years.

Woman need not continue in the servitude which is so widely believed to be her portion, and she need not hand down through child-bearing the weaknesses of former generations.

After the birth of her child, the influence of the mother can still be exercised as God's special provision for its growth in mental, physical, and spiritual stature. Her splendid opportunity is to awaken and train the spiritual consciousness of the infant, making possible for it a spontaneous spiritual life. This training should not wait for the consciousness or conscious co-operation of the child. and should not be made to depend upon it. The power and work of the Spirit is not conditioned by the child's development, but by the mother's faith, for indeed the development depends upon the power and work of the Spirit, operating through her faith. In its early years the child will not consciously resist the influences of the Spirit, and any resisting inherited weakness will be healed by a steady and patient faith on the part of the mother.

This should be the attitude of both parents from the first; they should never wait until the child is in ill-health before they exercise their faith on its behalf. One of the greatest mistakes of the modern disciples of Jesus Christ, which works incalculable harm, is to postpone the exercise of faith until sin or sickness has overtaken them. When this happens, and it does so very frequently, the sufferer is sorely handicapped, but he has only himself to thank for his weakness and inability. How should we scorn such a proceeding in any other sphere of activity and deem it as the utmost folly, as, for example, should a man handicap himself in a race by running in weighted boots.

The purpose of the Christian life is not that of a hospital ambulance, to come into action only at a time of sickness or accident. We should then build up the body, the mind, and the spirit of the child from the beginning on a foundation of spiritual truth, and walk by faith on behalf of the child, until it is able to walk by faith itself. The child will thus be saved from the harvest of sickness called children's complaints-measles, whoopingcough, and such-like ills-generally deemed as inevitable in its early years. Day by day we must exercise the life of faith, otherwise it will seem unreal and will set up a conflict in the mind and so lead to self-accusation of cowardice, if the resort to dependence upon God is delayed until sickness has established its presence in the home.

It is also of the first importance that time be spent each day in the sanctuary of prayer. Say your prayers and sing your hymns aloud at the bedside of the child; thank God that He sustains your child through the hours of the night, that its hours of slumber are passed in the Kingdom of Love and Peace.

Do not look for prayers only in books of devotion, but look also into your heart, and look into the Heart of God, for that Heart is full of love for the child, and thus your own heart may become a reservoir, filled from the Divine Fountain. You must persevere in the practice of prayer, until you realize that your own love has its source in the Love of God.

You must also determine the character of your relationship to the child and ask yourself, "To what extent is this child my child?"

Little progress can be made until this question is answered. It is not necessary for a solution to go beyond the simple facts. All life is from God: truly He makes use of human agency in the generation of human lives, but this does not entitle the human parents to more than a trusteeship of their children, and the best gift that a child can receive from its earthly parents is faith in the Fatherhood of God.

In order to train children in this faith in God, such faith must be a vital possession to the parents. We all agree that God is the Creator, but we are apt to forget that He is also the sustainer of life. Let the parents have faith in their homes that God alone provides for every need, and the children will naturally absorb the lesson, which need never be forced home to their minds.

Many unspiritual conceptions must be given up; when away from the child do not think of it as absent, or removed from your own, or from the Divine Presence. Do not indulge in too many good-byes when leaving the child and, on returning, do not ask whether you have been missed; to be missed is not always a sign of the highest love.

Never make the happiness, the safety, or the

life of the child seem to depend upon your presence.

When the child is old enough to repeat prayers, let them be very simple, such prayers as are appropriate to a child of its own age; do not force upon it any prayers which are proper to adult spiritual experience, and keep out of its spiritual life the problems which are fitting to the maturity of Job. Do all you can to confirm in the faith of the child the spontaneous love of God; it will reach the age of questioning quite soon enough without anticipation on your part. Children are not precocious when they ask what sound like grown-up questions; they have no intellectual difficulties, but they are often puzzled when some new thought enters their mind for which they cannot at present find a place.

This is an example of a prayer, suited to a small infant: "Dear Heavenly Father, let Thy love shine upon dear Daddie and Mummie, and every one in this house. Amen." Do not feel that you have failed to teach your child to pray, because it does not repeat long prayers full of difficult words; very often a simple hymn will be the best form of prayer. For example: "God who made the earth, the air, the sky, the sea, who gave the world its birth, careth for me." Such suitable hymns and songs are published with music in a collection of *Child Songs* by Carey Bonner.

Up to the age of five or six the following is a suitable grace: "Thank you for the world so sweet, thank you for the food we eat, thank you

for the birds that sing, thank you, God, for everything." From the age of six: "Bless, O Lord, these gifts to our use, and our lives to Thy service, for Christ's sake."

Scripture reading, again, must have a prominent place in the spiritual training of the child, but be careful not to read the Bible indiscriminately. There are now many excellent books properly graded for their use, such as *Go-to-Bed Stories*, and others of the same kind.

Should the unexpected happen, for we are assuming that your mind is free from expectations of sickness for your child, set all the forces of faith in operation at once; if you have two or three like-minded friends, ask them to unite with you in prayer, and pray without ceasing, so that the child may not remain for one moment unsupported by the prayer of faith. It will be the prayer of one whose consciousness is enjoying unbroken spiritual communion with God, and such a prayer of faith shall heal the sick, for such is the divine revelation. Bolt the door of your mind against fear. This will not be so difficult if you have, from the first, adjusted your relationship to the child and realize that vou are acting for God, and that He is reaching the child through your faith and love. There are two visions open to your understanding—one made up of that which is present to the physical senses, and the other the consciousness of a humanity made in the image of God. "The flesh profiteth nothing." "It is the Spirit that giveth life."

Whatever controls your mind will control all that

is present to your mind, therefore choose whom you will serve, and waste no time in getting to work. If your mind is in harmony with the Spirit, you will be amazed at the quietness and confidence with which it will be filled, and you will experience the fulfilment of the promise, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

CHAPTER XII

THE HEALING OF EVERY SICKNESS AND EVERY DISEASE

I T will be well to further consider, though briefly, the relation of medical science to divine healing. The author cannot commit himself, as bishops and other clergy often do, to unqualified approval of medical science. He would rather occupy the ground upon which many of the doctors stand, and range himself especially with those, many of them high up in their profession, who only use simple and natural remedies. He cannot pretend to believe that injecting animal matter and poisonous substances into the human body is the best way of doing God's work. His own position, based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Holy Scripture, which he does not regard as out of date, qualifies the use of material remedies, but he would not for one moment deprive others of such use.

To say that divine healing supplements medical healing only confuses the whole issue; Jesus Christ did not use material remedies, neither did He exercise divine healing to supplement them. If we have sufficient faith to be healed by the activity of forces on the spiritual plane, then there is no need to resort to forces on the material plane, for the words of Jesus Christ are not a platitude, but they

reveal a principle, "According to your faith be it unto you." Healing is not less healing because it is derived from the spiritual plane; the power to heal resides as fully in the spiritual plane, and flows through spiritual channels, as it does in the vegetable and mineral kingdoms, and flows through material channels.

We have largely lost the art of spiritual healing, and so we have come to think of it as a form of mental suggestion, corresponding to the results of taking medicines with a hopeful outlook. We have excluded the spiritual power from the means of healing, and have almost entirely limited healing processes to material methods. In recovering the lost art, we are bringing back a different means of healing, not merely an atmosphere which is favourable to healing. It is quite true that a cheerful disposition is an asset in favour of health, but we are here dealing with remedial and creative spiritual forces. It is for us to prove our case by reaching out help to sufferers according to the principles, and by an exercise of those methods established and practised by Jesus Christ.

We are students in the school of Jesus, learning His methods, and our success in this ministry will determine its relation to other sciences of healing; although such ministry is not opposed to them, it is, nevertheless, quite distinct from them, and it is doubtful whether it ever overlaps them. We must continue to work patiently, until we understand, and become adepts in the knowledge and processes

of the Spirit.

We face the fact of widespread sickness and disease; it is doubtful whether there is a single family in which there is not one member or a near relation with a medical history, of which consumption and cancer head the list and take a large toll of death, resisting every known form of treatment. The student of divine healing has an entirely different point of view from those who look for the physical antecedents of these diseases in seeking to combat and destroy them. He believes that the origin of disease is never physical, but that disease springs from the malignancy of the powers of spiritual darkness, manifesting their power on the physical plane of man's being. Jesus Christ met and destroyed disease on the spiritual plane, and it thereupon ceased to manifest itself on the visible or physical plane. Virtue or dynamic healing life flowed through and out of Him to the sufferer, and the disease was immediately arrested and brought to an end.

The Spirit plays a prominent and important part in the ministry of divine healing; the truth sets us free, but this truth is apprehended and appropriated inwardly by the Spirit. There is latent in man a faculty of spiritual consciousness whereby he is able to discern the things or realities of the Spirit. It is only at first that they are mentally discerned; the mental process is the means by which we receive the message. The intellect believes, but faith is more than intellectual belief. It was through the exercise of a faculty other than the conscious mind that the disciples saw the Transfiguration of Christ,

although the conscious mind shared in the experience. The mind carries us a certain distance. It can take us up to the threshold of the spiritual world, but at this point the spirit must take over the task from the mind.

Man's next step in growth is the evolution of his spiritual consciousness, or the mind of the spirit, and this was the informing centre of all the experiences and ministry of Jesus Christ. He weighed conditions and diagnosed the ills of humanity by means of the inner consciousness or mind of the spirit. Those around Him were strangers to His higher knowledge; they lived and moved on the plane of the physical senses, and thus they diagnosed and prescribed. Jesus Christ, however, opens up to us another realm of knowledge and activity, and He would have us live and move and have our being there.

There are comparatively few who are consciously making the endeavour to enter more fully into the life of the Spirit. The number of those who are thus born again of the Spirit are far exceeded by those who do not rise above the physical plane. But the spiritual desire is ever increasing, and we belong to a generation which is fast approaching the earnestness and intensive faith of the primitive days of the Church. If you would share in this upward movement you must seek the companionship and friendship of Jesus, the Divine Physician, and learn of Him. He is not only meek and lowly of heart, but He is profoundly wise and spiritually enlightened. He will impart the higher knowledge

to all who inquire of Him, and so, praying from the spirit, with your whole being in harmony with God, you will pray with power.

Practise the Presence of Christ; practise the Patience of Christ; practise the Mind of Christ; practise the Will of Christ; practise His heart, His generosity, His loving-kindness. You may now safely embark upon the ministry of divine healing. This equipment will suffice you, no matter what the disease you may have to meet.

Since faith does not rest upon a physical foundation, it will not be controlled by physical conditions or be subverted by physical symptoms. Hold the vision of faith, which is spiritual; keep it and work from this centre. With the eyes of faith, you will see beyond the diseased bodily form to the perfect spiritual form. If at first this seems unreal or impossible, kneel down in a room away from the sufferer and ask God to impart the vision to you; wait until the vision of faith becomes fixed, hold fast to it, and then enter the sick-room.

When Jesus Christ approached a sick person His face and manner did not reflect the condition weighing down the sufferer, but the promise of the healing at hand; He was not overcome, and His faith was not impaired by what He saw. His faith overcame the sickness, because the weapons of His warfare were spiritual. The sickness will try to cast its dark shadow on the mind, so as to extinguish the light and vision of faith; but the weapons of our warfare, like those of the Master, are spiritual, to the pulling down of strongholds—and the strong-

holds of disease, of fear, of feebleness, of wavering, and of shadows.

Do not heed those who give up hope, and say that you refuse to face the truth; but pray that they too may have the vision. Disease is not the truth, and how can God manifest His healing through those fixed limits of His power? It is not for you to judge the length of days, which are in His keeping, but to endeavour to remove disease out of the path of man.

The physical change that we commonly call "death" does not need the assistance of sickness and disease; they are not the doors appointed by God for our exit from the earth life. In death, we are translated from the visible and material to the invisible and spiritual; but this change of state can be accomplished without the virulence and pangs of cancer, or the convulsions and distortions of epilepsy. These conditions do not bear the impress of God. Practise the courage and boldness of Jesus Christ; face them as He faced them; deny them as He denied them; destroy them as He destroyed them. Practise the faith of Jesus Christ, and you will remove the mountains of corruption; do not waver from any sense of doubtfulness. You could not tread a safer path, or one more agreeable to the will of God, than that which has been trodden by Jesus Christ. You will often hear discourses and sermons on the mystery of suffering that seem unanswerable, until you prefer the Gospel revelation of Jesus to the wisdom of men.

Above all, have "fervent charity." The disposi-

tion of the disciple should differ in nothing from that of his Master; it is regrettable that not a few who are zealous in every other particular overlook this greatest spiritual value in discipleship. Jesus was "Love Incarnate," but, of all the excellent riches of His perfect life. His wealth of love outshines the others. It was, moreover, the secret of His power with God and with men. If you would have power in the Name of Christ, the expression of divine love must abound to overflowing in all your service. "Love is never irritated" (Moffatt's translation). The temptation to be impatient, or irritated, often crosses the path of those who would reach out help to sufferers, but all efforts are foredoomed to failure unless the one who would help has himself well in hand: those who would follow their blessed Lord in His ministry of healing must be "rooted and grounded in love," and so know the love of God "which passeth knowledge," that they may be filled with "all the fulness of God."

PART II

CHAPTER XIII

THE WILL OF GOD IN SICKNESS

THE attempt, which is being made, to revive the ministry of healing as part of the normal work of the Church has proved to be a challenge to thought, as to what the will of God is in regard to sickness. Such questions as these are raised: whether disease is sent or permitted by God as a means of spiritual discipline and development for certain people; whether it is a part of the physical order appointed by Him, and therefore only to be dealt with legitimately by natural means; and if miracles were phenomena associated only with the first years of the Church's life, so that the age of miracles was necessarily replaced by an age of science.

Whatever the answer to these questions, it is clear in the first place that the existence of physical disorders is bound up with that mystery of evil, which has proved insoluble to human thought. No one may hope to fathom this mystery, yet it is one which cannot be ignored, since it must at some

time or other trouble every thoughtful person. It is right and reasonable to try to see as far as is possible into this great question, and, if so, it is essential that thought should be directed on sound principles. To Christian people there can be no question of the absolute sovereignty of God, from which neither freedom of will permitted to man, nor any other conceivable power or condition can detract in the slightest degree, and yet we know that God's will is not done on the earth, not only because evil is everywhere active around us, but because our Lord Himself has commanded and taught us to pray that it may be so, that God's Kingdom may come and His will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

To distinguish the will of God's permission from the will of His good pleasure may be found a help to thought by some, but there must be many to whom this seems only a playing with words, which does not go to the root of the matter. The mystery of omnipotence and of the will free to choose evil remains.

God's ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son hath declared Him. The Christian can no more admit a doubt that God is Love, than that He is Almighty. But there is need to beware of turning away from the one perfect revelation of the Father in the eternal Son of Man, and of thinking of the God who is incomprehensible by human thought, as though He had been made in the image of man rather than man in the image of God. Even heathen philosophy

scoffed at the follies of an anthropomorphic religion, but it is fatally easy to allow thoughts of God to stray along the lines of human analogy, unless they are constantly corrected, by reference to the teaching and example of our Lord. God's will is not as the will of a man, needing a separate and definite act of will to achieve each definite object; but infinity and the absolute will are so far beyond the reach of man's mind, that it is hard to think of God on other than human lines, even though the intellect may recognize that they are inadequate and apt to mislead.

It is easy to speak of God as eternal, but impossible fully to grasp the import of eternity. God is unchanging, and the will of God cannot be an arbitrary or changing will, working now one thing and now another, at the mercy of conflicting human prayers. To many minds the fact of two people, or sets of people, praying for opposite things at the same time presents a real difficulty. as though it were possible for man to dictate to God, or the value of prayer was to be measured by weight of numbers. It may be some apprehension of seeming to try to dictate to God, which makes people hesitate to ask Him for the bodily healing, which is what they really want, when healing is improbable on purely physical grounds; but those who pray only for what they think they ought to want, and not for that which in their hearts they know they do want, are in some danger of falling into unreality or dishonesty in prayer. It would be impious to pray for what is known to

be wrong, but it is not for us to decide what God will not give, any more than what He will. "Ask, and ye shall receive." "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."

It is incredible that the eternal Father should have made the body and mind of man, or any other part of His creation, with the purpose that they should be marred by the terrible afflictions of mind and body which have come to be regarded as the natural heritage of man. It cannot be supposed that sickness is an instrument designed for any particular purpose, for God's providence is an abiding ever-present power, with no omissions which need to be supplied by special measures, as though the eternal Wisdom, like a good and wise earthly father, might yet be taken unawares by some unforeseen circumstance. The will of God is an all-pervading and eternal energy of love, not a chain of "special providences" either of judgment or of blessing. Yet, knowing this, we need not hesitate to turn for help to Him in the greatest or in the most trifling and momentary need, since we live each moment under the abiding protection of His good providence, and that eternal foresight has provided exceeding abundantly above

all that we ask or think for the care of each one of those who will put their trust in Him.

If the will of God is unchanging and of absolute goodness, it is unthinkable that He should do evil at any time, or in any form, that good may come. In the wilderness the Son of God faced that temptation of Satan, and overcame it. It is a very different thing to say that God brings good out of evil, for His perfect and eternal will must ever be correcting evil, overcoming evil with good, and by the tranquil operation of His perpetual providence raising up that which was cast down, renewing that which had grown old, and causing all things to return to perfection through Jesus Christ our Lord. That spiritual or physical good may come from disease to the sufferer, or to others through his suffering, is no proof that God has sent disease, as a moral discipline, for any man, although it is a glorious evidence of that absolute sovereignty of God, to the thought of which it is so hard to hold fast in the face of the sin of the world. It is part of the mystery of evil and of salvation, that the innocent suffer with and for the guilty, and we know that the perfect sacrifice of the Son of Man turned the very triumph of sin into the means of salvation. Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, and though life, given in death, was the means of salvation, nevertheless death came first by sin.

When in the Garden our Saviour prayed that the Father's will might be done, His will was the salvation of the world, and it was the sin of man that set up the cross and nailed the Lord thereon. Because of the sovereignty of Almighty Love, sin destroyed itself in the moment of its conquest, and a clearer vision would show us all evil thus vanishing and impotent beneath the mighty power of God.

Christian people do not live without sin in this present life, as they should do if they lived altogether in Christ. Neither do they live free from sickness; but disease had no place in the life and death of atonement for man's sin, and there is, in it, no kind of sanctity. Yet in the physical body there is some disease which is clearly remedial in its character, and pain often warns of future dangers which can be averted. We cannot ignore the possibility that if we knew more fully how best to deal with all diseases, they would be found a means of setting the body free from the dire consequences of that disobedience to the natural laws of God. which had caused them. We are very far from such vision and such knowledge, and we can only hope to attain them if we recognize the will of God in the healing of disease as distinct from disease itself. To imagine for a moment that sin or sickness have in themselves a divine purpose or origin is to give them a permanence and reality, and a dominion over us which is not rightly theirs.

CHAPTER XIV

HUMAN MALADIES

THE origin of disease, lying behind all physical causes, is plain enough. Social conditions, insanitary houses, lack of cleanliness and pure air, insufficient and unwholesome food, drunkenness, vice, ignorance, sloth, greed, covetousness and fear, the pride, the sin and the folly of mankind are at the root of physical disorder. Man chose his own way, and divergence from the will of God meant separation from the fulness of life, and therefore disease and death. Disease, thus rooted in social wrong, is only to be remedied by the consecration of the lives of men to God. Christ wrought His mighty works, because He gave His will wholly to fulfil the will of the Father.

Spiritual healing in His Name is not an easy shortcut to physical relief like a quack remedy, but the opening of the spirit to God's Spirit, and the heart and mind and will centred in Him. If we attribute our sicknesses to the will of God we are indirectly attributing the sin of man to Him, as though our Heavenly Father might be compared to the dread Fate of pagan tragedy. We know that the individual sufferer is often perfectly innocent of wrong, and we are forbidden by Christ to assume that sickness is a direct punishment for sin. The thought of suffering, inflicted by God for the good of His children, springs from an unworthy conception of the eternal wisdom and long-suffering of infinite Love, as though the chastisement of God was like that of an earthly father who assures his son that in inflicting it he hurts himself most, a statement not calculated to carry conviction. God does not punish man for sin in the same sense as human authority punishes, but His wisdom and His goodness have so ordered the universe that sin brings its own punishment. The punishment then, like the sin, is the act of mankind, and to attribute it to God is to lay the sin at His door.

Since the connection between sin and disease is so close, we cannot effectively fight disease without fighting sin also, but the thought that sickness is sent by God for some beneficent purpose cannot but have a deadening influence upon the sense of responsibility which all should feel, and make it even more easy to allow indolence, or custom, or fear of public opinion to prevent Christian people from doing all that in them lies to right social wrong, or to follow, and help others to follow, the natural laws which minister to health. The doubt that sickness may be of God must result in paralysing effort in the curing of it, both for ourselves and others.

Prayer for the sick can hardly be as single-minded, or as persevering as it ought to be, if there is a thought behind it that the prayer may itself be a fighting against God. Such a thought weakens in some degree that natural desire for bodily health,

which is God-given, and is a necessary condition of maintaining it. Some are unwilling, either consciously or unconsciously, to exert or to deny themselves by taking the measures necessary for health, or even to face the consequences of its restoration. An invalid or a person with some physical disability escapes certain responsibilities, and is accustomed to receive a certain consideration from others, and to have allowances made for them if they are irritable or depressed or selfish in small matters.

All this involves a subtle temptation to give in to a certain degree of ill-health, without any deliberate intention of making a profit of it; for it needs a good deal of determination, especially for one with lowered vitality, to make and to persist in such minor alterations in an accustomed way of living with regard to diet, smoking, exercise or fresh air as may be necessary for the avoidance of ailments, which are often a greater trial to others than to the sufferer from them. It is easy for a person, who regards sickness as inevitable or as sent by God for some mysterious purpose, to fall into the error of making the will of God responsible for shortcomings of his own.

To others whose illness is a genuine affliction the same belief inevitably brings the temptation to rebel against that which they believe to be due to the exercise of divine intervention. The most saintly character, schooled to long endurance, must have moments of doubt and distress in contemplating powers, God-given, so sorely circumscribed.

when a feeling of rebellion against God cannot be crushed down.

It is startling to find that the long-suffering which is a fruit of the Spirit of Life can be interpreted by any one, however small their vocabulary, as denoting a lengthy illness. There is a pagan fatalism in the words of one suddenly bereaved, "We must take what God sends, and bear up against misfortune as best we may." It is surely a terrible thing that God's daily blessings should be received with little thankfulness or thought of Him, while any grave calamity of illness or accident of which the physical cause happens to be unknown is attributed to an act of God. It is sadly true to life that, of the ten lepers cleansed, only one returned to give thanks. An unexpected happiness, a stroke of luck, is commonly thought of as an irrational accident, and even direct answers to prayer explained away as coincidence, with no attempt to go behind the evasion and discover what a coincidence is.

When Christian people can in so ungenerous a fashion misrepresent God, by showing in speech or action that they deem Him more ready to punish than to bless, what wonder is it that troubled and thoughtful souls have been driven away from Him and forced to deny that He is; better if there be no God than this. Or in another direction it is but a short step to look upon the striving for bodily health as a kind of impiety, and physical well-being as actually inconsistent with true spiritual welfare. To some minds there is a perverse comfort in the

thought that the ills which may befall them are a retribution for some early but not too heinous sin, such as youthful vanity.

Such a fanciful explanation can hardly fail to obstruct the work of the physician who prescribes physical remedies for a malady which he knows has a physical cause, since his patient is less likely to persevere with any treatment which is troublesome or does not bring immediate physical relief. The false consolation for illness has even a kind of self-importance at the root of it, and since it is untrue it is injurious to the honour of God.

On the other hand, if health of soul and body are equally the heritage of God's children there is a new motive for earnestness and hope in fighting against disease. A new motive for the strong to help those who are less fortunate than themselves, for, if we are not in immediate contact with the sick, there is so little that most of us can do for them that the feeling of impotence breeds an indifference to the suffering we do not see and can do nothing to allay. But if spiritual effort is a practical means of healing, all can take an active part in it through their prayers, and all must face the responsibility of neglect. The possibility of helping those who suffer quickens sympathy and stirs the will to action, and those who will pray for the healing of others will not thereby be prevented from ministering to them with every loving service and forbearance. For those who are sick there is still ample room to exercise all the virtues, which have been cultivated by those who believed that for some beneficent purpose God had afflicted them, to fight or to endure with courage, with patient cheerfulness and unselfish thought for others.

Though sickness springs from evil it still gives the opportunity, which every other trial of life affords, for the practice of Christian love and gratitude, not in blind obedience to an inscrutable will. but in a sure and steadfast trust that God is with us in the war against sin, disease, and death. There is a new motive for self-control and for courage to one who endures suffering as a wounded soldier of the heavenly host, stricken for a time in the conflict with the powers of evil, but knowing God the Comforter at hand, ever ready to defend and to heal. The sufferer may cry with saints and martyrs, "Lord, how long?" in the spirit not of rebellion but of sacrifice, assured that God's permission is not a passive standing aside from evil, but is, like every other exercise of the divine will, positive and beneficent, transforming evil itself into a means of good.

He will not be afraid of disappointment, for one who has the courage to come to God in prayer for physical healing beyond the bounds of scientific knowledge will be less readily shaken in his trust in God by hope deferred, than those who hesitate to approach Him, so long as he comes in honesty of heart. For true prayer can never be an attempt to test the reality of the love or power of God by experiment before credence is given them. Trust is impossible, no more than a deception and a sham, if it is only to follow and not precede realization.

If we truly believe that healing is God's will and that will unchanging, not death itself will shake the conviction that the divine purpose must ultimately come to pass.

No one can draw near to God without receiving some measure of His blessing, and sickness may be a means of leading us to approach Him, but we need have no fear that without it the daily round, the common tasks of Christian living in a world of other standards, will fail to provide all the opportunities we need for strength and patience and for the exercise of our faith in God. And equally, though faith be a means of healing, no one can dare to say that any, who are not healed through the offering of much and earnest prayer, are therefore lacking in faith.

It is gross folly and presumption for those who are whole, lightly to condemn another less fortunate than themselves, when their own faith has not been put to the proof by any similar trial. It is the part of those who are strong in faith to help and to heal, never to criticize the faith of others, and failure in faith is a corporate sin of which all are guilty: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

In His own country the general atmosphere of criticism and unbelief prevented Christ Himself from performing any mighty work, though, even here, He laid His hands on a few sick folk and healed them. There is no room for an easy superficial belief that any one with faith in God need never be ill. If ever a man's faith might seem to be justified it was St. Peter's when he felt assured

that God might be trusted to save His Christ from shame and death at the hands of wicked men. Which of us, believing in Him as St. Peter confessed that he did, would not have merited the terrible rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men"?

Although our prayers are not to be limited by human expectation of what is possible, when the power of God is not taken into account, it is not for us to plan out in prayer any course of time or method for the loving wisdom of the Father, nor to question it, if the result does not square with our expectation or our hope. We do not know what is our highest good, but we are called to bring the sick to Christ that it may be unto them according to His will, believing that will to be always as it was when He moved visibly among men. The nature of prayer makes it all the more easy thus to leave time and way to Him, for it is not natural to the mind to think at once and equally of God to whom we pray, and of the person or the need we bring into His presence. Earnest desire must mean concentration upon the one or the other.

If we dwell too fixedly upon the details of our prayer, and forget the presence of God, prayer ceases to be prayer at all except in the sense that to God all hearts are open and every wish speaks. In resisting this temptation, we must needs try to lift up our hearts the more steadfastly to Him, and earnestness in prayer must then mean that our own hopes and fears fall more and more into the back-

ground of the mind. We need make no attempt to recover the fading items of our request, because the Father knoweth all our needs before we ask Him, far more surely than we can ever do. We need not be anxious to concern ourselves with the methods of God's working, since we have been given the clearest guidance upon the main question as to His will in regard to disease. We need not strive to solve the mysteries of evil and of atonement, to grasp the nature and purposes of God which are beyond human understanding, or to conceive for ourselves a superman of inconceivable power and doubtful intentions. No man hath seen God at any time, but the only-begotten Son hath declared Him. The abstractions of philosophy may only confuse us, but the perfect Son of Man has shown us the Father in a way plain to the simplest: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

CHAPTER XV

THE TEACHING OF OUR LORD

TURN then finally to the Gospels. Criticism has been made in the press that in examining the question of spiritual healing "the most obvious and authoritative source, the teaching of Jesus Himself in the four Gospels," has been neglected—this teaching, given both in word and deed, is our first and final authority, for there is nothing else which can modify or supersede it.

We can know no better understanding of the Father's will than the life and teaching of Him whose will was one with the Father's. And this authority is clear beyond possibility of misunderstanding; there is no warrant in the Gospels for the belief that God sends sickness. Only one passage can be twisted to bear such a meaning. Of the man born blind our Lord said, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." The answer is definite that the blind man's suffering was not a personal chastisement for sin, and the sequel shows, as countless works of mercy had shown already, that the works of God were healing and blessing for body and for spirit.

Having exposed the disciples' mistake as to the

origin of the blindness, the Master did not go on to say whence it was. To read into His words the meaning that God caused it in order that in due time the healing of it should confound the spiritual blindness of the Jews, is to appraise the character of the Creator by a human standard not of the most exalted kind. To inflict suffering, in order to display the power of relieving it, is not an act of Love but of self-glorification.

The woman who was bowed together had been bound for eighteen years by Satan, and the impotent man was told to sin no more lest a worse thing should come unto him. The spirits that held men's minds in bondage were evil spirits, devils to be driven out by the word of God. Whatever the cause of sickness, whether it was the fault of the sufferer or not, the Saviour's action was always the same, to forgive and to heal. He came to do the will of Him who sent Him, and when multitudes came to Him He healed them all. He never failed or refused to heal those who sought His help.

More than this, antagonism or doubt with regard to healing seem to have aroused His anger or disappointment more quickly than anything else. He marvelled at the unbelief of His own countrymen. In the synagogue He looked round about upon His critics with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, when they desired to hedge round the exercise of God's healing power with their own conventional restrictions. When His disciples could not cast out the dumb spirit He exclaimed, "Oh! faithless generation, how long

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shall I be with you, how long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto Me." How easy to understand this anger, this bitterness of disappointment, if He saw in the antagonism and doubt with which His healing was regarded, not only the hostility of His enemies to His earthly ministry, but an indication, which could not be ignored, of the coming apostasy of His Church in respect to so great a part of the mission entrusted to her!

When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth? What is the position of the Church to-day? Many doubt if it is lawful to seek for healing from Christ when ordinary means have failed; they would limit the exercise of God's living power to certain accustomed channels, even when these have proved inadequate. "Is it lawful to save life or to kill?" Are His disciples not faithless still, fearing to act upon the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway"?

Is hardness of heart and unbelief the true reason why the age of miracles seemed to pass away so soon? Surely the command of the eternal Word of the Father, "Bring him unto Me," was not spoken only for the moment or for the individual need, but is of universal application and is valid to-day. We have still the same proof of the reality of spiritual healing as Christ offered to His own contemporaries, though now in less degree. "Is it easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven; or, Take up thy bed and walk?" "Though ye believe not Me, believe the works." "Believe Me for the very works' sake."

Works of divine healing are with us still, but, because some may have been guilty of self-deception, the Church is slow to believe or to give the glory to God, searching out, as it would seem, some other method of explaining them away. Even so the scribes which came down from Jerusalem to make their official inquiry decided that Christ cast out devils by the prince of the devils, and stood in danger of an eternal sin. It is a faithless generation that seeks after a sign of its own devising and cannot discern the signs of the times.

That it might be clear that the command to heal was not only given to those who knew Him in the flesh or for a limited time, but that the will of God is eternally what Christ showed it to be, when He dwelt visibly among men on earth, He gave the direct assurance, "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do," adding the explanation of the power given to His followers, "because I go unto My Father." "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

He "sitteth on the right hand of the Father." What do the words convey to those who recite them? What of this session of our living Lord with His Father and our Father? Is it merely a passive waiting in His triumph while we strive to

follow? "Nevertheless I tell you the truth," He said to His sorrowful disciples, "it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." Was it in very truth expedient, or did the Ascension half undo the victory of Easter, so that the Church must live bereft of her Lord until the great day of His appearing? Do we in our hearts honestly believe and feel that we are better off than those friends of His, or than the multitudes who pressed about Him for His blessing in word or deed, in the days in Galilee when "the Holy Ghost was not yet given: because that Jesus was not yet glorified"?

We hear it said that we cannot hope to live as the first Christians lived, who had known Him in the flesh; but how then is the Church of Christ ever to grow up into Him in all things, unto the perfect "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"? We call the Church the extension of the Incarnation, the mystical body of Christ inspired by the Holy Spirit who proceedeth from the Father and the Son. Week by week we pray that we may "evermore dwell in Him and He in us." "I go away and come again unto you." "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you"; and having come He is eternally with us. "I am"—not "I shall be"—" with you always."

Christ's presence in His Church is a real presence—spiritual, it is true, but not therefore unsubstantial

or imaginary, nor limited in its operation to the spiritual part of man. For the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, and it is only in speech not in actual fact that the line can be drawn between them. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

Among those things, which he had commanded by teaching and by the example of His life, which all nations are to learn to observe, the healing of the sick by spiritual power had a most prominent place. It was to those who received Him that He gave power to become the sons of God, to those who put their trust in His name. The doubt that His will and the will of the Father is not now what it ever was, in regard to the healing of physical infirmity, is a hindrance to the exercise of that will in His Church. In this, as in all other things, the will of man must be conformed to His, trusting in the loving power of Almighty God to save both soul and body, if His will is to be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

O Heavenly Father, whose Blessed Son Jesus Christ did weep at the grave of Lazarus His friend: Look, we beseech Thee, with compassion upon those who are now in sorrow and affliction; comfort them, O Lord, with Thy gracious consolations; make them to know that all things work together for good to them that love Thee; and grant them evermore sure trust and confidence in Thy Fatherly care, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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